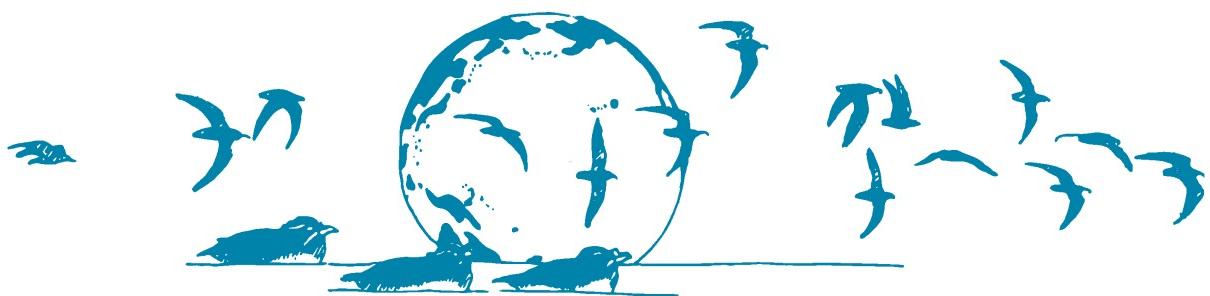


# PACIFIC SEABIRDS



A Publication of the Pacific Seabird Group

Volume 36 Number 1

Spring 2009

# PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP

Dedicated to the Study and Conservation of Pacific Seabirds  
and Their Environment

The Pacific Seabird Group (PSG) was formed in 1972 due to the need for better communication among Pacific seabird researchers. PSG provides a forum for the research activities of its members, promotes the conservation of seabirds, and informs members and the public of issues relating to Pacific Ocean seabirds and their environment. PSG members include research scientists, conservation professionals, and members of the public from all parts of the Pacific Ocean. The group also welcomes seabird professionals and enthusiasts in other parts of the world. PSG holds annual meetings at which scientific papers and symposia are presented; abstracts for meetings are published on our web site. The group is active in promoting conservation of seabirds, including seabird/fisheries interactions, monitoring of seabird populations, seabird restoration following oil spills, establishment of seabird sanctuaries, and endangered species. Policy statements are issued on conservation issues of critical importance. PSG's journals are *Pacific Seabirds* (formerly the *PSG Bulletin*) and *Marine Ornithology*. Other publications include symposium volumes and technical reports; these are listed near the back of this issue. PSG is a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Ornithological Council, and the American Bird Conservancy. Annual dues for membership are \$30 (individual and family); \$24 (student, undergraduate and graduate); and \$900 (Life Membership, payable in five \$180 installments). Dues are payable to the Treasurer; see the PSG web site, or the Membership Order Form next to inside back cover.

## World Wide Web Site

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## Donations

The Pacific Seabird Group is a nonprofit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of California. Contributions to the Pacific Seabird Group are tax deductible [IRS Section 501(c)(3)] to the fullest extent allowed by law.

## *Pacific Seabirds*

*Pacific Seabirds* publishes short peer-reviewed articles, reports of ongoing work, conservation news, and other items of importance to conservation of seabirds in the Pacific Ocean. The journal is published twice a year in spring and fall. Materials should be submitted to the Editor, except that conservation-related material should be submitted to the Associate Editor for Conservation. Information for contributors to *Pacific Seabirds* is published in each Fall issue. Back issues of the *Bulletin* or *Pacific Seabirds* are posted on the group's web site or may be ordered from the treasurer (see Membership/Order Form next to inside back cover for details). Submission deadlines are April 1 for the spring issue and October 1 for the fall issue; manuscripts may be submitted at any time.

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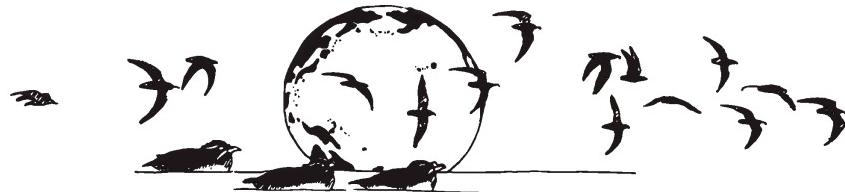
*Marine Ornithology* presents peer-reviewed contributions concerning international seabird science and conservation. The journal is published two times a year. It is available on its web site or by subscription. The journal is supported by a partnership of global seabird societies, including the Pacific Seabird Group (PSG), African Seabird Group, Australasian Seabird Group, the Seabird Group (U.K.), Dutch Seabird Group, and Japan Seabird Group. For further information see [www.marineornithology.org](http://www.marineornithology.org)

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# PACIFIC SEABIRDS

## A Publication of the Pacific Seabird Group



Dedicated to the Study and Conservation of Pacific Seabirds and Their Environment

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# SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

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The Pacific Seabird Group occasionally honors outstanding contributors to seabird science and conservation with Lifetime Achievement or Special Achievement Awards. At the 35th Annual Meeting in Blaine, Washington in February 2008, PSG presented the Lifetime Achievement Award to John Croxall and the Special Achievement Award to Lora Leschner and Kim Nelson. Our tribute to Croxall was published in *Pacific Seabirds* 35(1), 2008.

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## LORA LESCHNER AND KIM NELSON

By George J. Divoky and Kathy Kuletz

At the Pacific Seabird Group's 2008 Annual Meeting in Blaine, Washington, the Special Achievement Award was presented to Lora Leschner and Kim Nelson. Each has made significant and long-term contributions to our knowledge and management of Pacific seabirds and to PSG. Their individual histories and contributions are discussed below. Both have made major contributions to the study and conservation of the Marbled Murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*). It is worth starting our tribute by describing their collective efforts to produce and sustain PSG's Marbled Murrelet Technical Committee.

Since its inception, the Pacific Seabird Group has been dedicated to increasing the exchange and distribution of information on seabirds and the marine environment. In contrast to many scientific societies, PSG also strove to use its members' collective expertise to address pressing research and conservation issues, and to pass on their findings and recommendations to both government and industry. No activity of the PSG in its first three decades embodies those aspirations better than the Marbled Murrelet Technical Committee (MMTC). Although a North American nest of the Marbled Murrelet had not been discovered when PSG was founded in the early 1970s, the early 1980s witnessed a rapid increase in our knowledge of the species, its dependence on coastal old-growth forests for nesting and, perhaps most importantly, its dwindling numbers in the nearshore marine habitat. PSG

first expressed its concern in an Executive Council resolution in 1982, which pointed out that most of the coastal old-growth was scheduled to be harvested in the next 50 years, asked US and Canadian agencies to consider the Marbled Murrelet in their management plans, and urged more research on the species. During the first Marbled Murrelet workshop in 1986, organized by Lora and attended by Kim and others, a resolution was passed that emphasized the imminent harvest of remaining old-growth forests in California, Oregon and Washington in the next 20 years, and in Alaska and British Columbia within the next 50 years. That resolution urged "state, provincial and federal agencies to immediately establish an interagency group to address research and management needs for the Marbled Murrelet." Lora convened meetings of Marbled Murrelet researchers again in 1987 and 1988. A workshop to discuss the management concerns for the species in 1988 resulted in the official establishment of the Marbled Murrelet Technical Committee, then referred to as the "interagency group" that was called for in the 1986 resolution. Lora chaired the MMTC from 1986 to 1989, and Kim chaired the committee from 1990 to 1993.

PSG took the lead on Marbled Murrelet management issues and remained actively involved for over two decades. This says a good deal about the group, but it probably says more about Lora and Kim, and about the integrity they brought to the committee's founding and its early years. They coordinated

research, conservation and management concerns for a threatened species, whose conservation had the potential of impacting million of dollars of timber harvest; this required individuals with a unique ability to listen to the concerns of a diverse group of researchers, conservationists, and resource managers, while simultaneously addressing the forces of agencies and the timber industry. The committee developed nesting habitat survey protocols for the Marbled Murrelet that were adopted by agencies and industry in 1992, an achievement that took the organizational, personal and political skills (not to mention patience) that both Lora and Kim have displayed in abundance throughout their careers.

The Pacific Seabird Group provided a forum where Marbled Murrelet researchers could present their information and discuss their concerns with other researchers. It also developed the organizational framework that allowed formation of a committee and workshops where Marbled Murrelet issues could be addressed. It was the dedication and abilities of both Lora and Kim, however, that allowed the MMTC to be a success, as they worked within this framework. As they established and developed the MMTC, it is important to remember that they had no template from which to work. Although research, conservation, and management clearly had been done before with many species, the MMTC was a unique entity. The committee was created by a professional society to address an issue identified by members of

## SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

the society, but it brought all stakeholders to the table to discuss methods for monitoring and preserving the species, and ultimately they agreed on the best approaches. The Pacific Seabird Group and the wider conservation and management communities owe a great deal to Lora and Kim for their efforts. That is why PSG's Executive Council voted to present them both with the Special Achievement Award.

Lora's award was presented by George Divoky; Kim's award was presented by Kathy Kuletz.

### LORA LESCHNER

Lora Leschner received her BA from the University of Washington in 1972. She earned her MS in Wildlife Science from UW in 1976 for research on Rhinoceros Auklets (*Cerorhinca monocerata*) on Destruction Island, studying under Dave Manuwal, one of PSG's founders. Lora then joined the influx of seabird researchers to Alaska under the US Minerals Management Service's Outer Continental Shelf Environmental Assessment Program (OCSEAP). She worked on the remote Semidi Islands in the Gulf of Alaska in summer of 1976,



George Divoky presenting Lora Leschner's award. (Where does he find his famous photos?!)

and then in the Anchorage office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In 1977 she was hired by the Washington State Department of Wildlife, where over three decades she has worked on a range of research, resource management, and conservation issues. In the late 1970s, she was part of a team of biologists that developed the first list of at-risk candidate species for the state, and she began its first nongame wildlife while she con-

tinued research on Rhinoceros Auklets. She also represented her department on two interagency committees that dealt with Spotted Owls (*Strix occidentalis*). In the 1980s she was an Area Wildlife Biologist, responsible for wildlife programs in Snohomish and Island Counties and the nongame program in San Juan County. Her work included marine and inland surveys of Marbled Murrelets in the San Juan Islands, and she initiated the Puget Sound Ambient Monitoring Program (PSAMP) bird surveys, which continue to this day.

She founded the Pacific Seabird Group's Marbled Murrelet Technical Committee and hosted three international meetings on that species. In 1994, she served as Regional Director for Washington Department of Wildlife for a five-county area, where she coordinated, managed, and supervised a host of programs in the Puget Sound region, including those for Information and Education,



Lora Leschner accepting PSG's Special Achievement Award. (Another of her achievements is displayed on the screen.)

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Kim Nelson during her favorite activity: driving a boat on a murrelet survey.

Lands, Habitat, Fish Management, Enforcement, and Wildlife Management. Since 1994, she has been Regional Wildlife Program Manager, managing lands (18,000 acres in 6 counties) and wildlife programs in Northeast Puget Sound. Her program is involved in many marine projects, including assessment of populations and habitat use of scoters (*Melanitta spp.*) in Puget Sound, shorebirds in Skagit and Port Susan Bay, Marbled Murrelet nest-site surveys, forest practices review, Marbled Murrelet and seabird surveys, and assisting in studies of harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*). She has sponsored a number of coastal wetland and estuary grants in northern Puget Sound, and has worked closely with local and state agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and Indian tribes to facilitate land acquisition, recreation, and projects for estuary restoration.

In addition to her role in the Marbled Murrelet Technical Committee, Lora has been an important part of PSG since its inception. She was on the Local Committee for PSG's first annual meeting in 1974, at Issaquah, Washington, and was chair or co-chair of local committees for another four annual meetings in the

Puget Sound region (1981, 1993, 1999 and 2008). She has served on the Executive Council for a total of 13 years: as Regional Representative for Washington from 1977 to 1980; Chair-elect of the Executive Council in 1985, Chair in 1986, and Past Chair in 1987-1989 (it was a three-year term then!); and Secretary in 2000-2003.

### KIM NELSON

Kim Nelson received her BA at Lewis and Clark College in 1980 and her MSc in Wildlife Ecology at Oregon State University in 1989. Her research from 1982 to 1989 examined habitat use and abundance of cavity-nesting birds, forest bird communities, and the ecology of the Northern Spotted Owl. It was during this field work that she first heard Marbled Murrelets, 30 miles inland in the Oregon Coast Range. Finding that almost nothing was known about this seabird, she finished her Master's degree and turned her interest to murrelets. As a Research Wildlife Biologist and member of the faculty in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife at Oregon State University, Kim started researching Marbled Murrelets in 1988 and by 1990 had found the first Oregon nest sites. She helped Lora initiate PSG's Marbled Murrelet Technical Committee and subsequently served as its chair.

Kim currently sits on the Inland Marbled Murrelet Effectiveness Monitoring team for the Northwest Forest Plan, and she is on a scientific team that is developing a long-term Marbled Murrelet habitat management strategy for the Washington Department of Natural Resources. Kim has served on many



Kathy Kuletz and Kim Nelson enjoy PSG's Conservation Gala dinner, shortly before Kathy presented the Special Achievement Award to Kim.

## SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

scientific teams, including as a contributor and editor of the 10-year status review of the Marbled Murrelet, as an advisor to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Marbled Murrelet Recovery Team, in the development of the North American Colonial Waterbird Conservation Plan, and as an author on a monitoring plan for seabirds in the California Current.

Kim's recent work hasn't all been on Marbled Murrelets. She has studied nest-site characteristics, forest stand and landscape associations, abundance, foraging ranges, diet, productivity, and nesting behavior of a variety of seabirds of the Pacific, including Marbled Murrelets, Long-billed Murrelets (*Brachyramphus perdix*), Caspian Terns (*Sterna caspia*), other alcid species, and Double-crested Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*). Other topics have included contaminants in seabird prey and modeling of seabird spatial distributions in relation to prey. Her research has extended from central California to the Bering Sea. Kim has published more than 30 scientific papers on her research.

Kim's work within PSG has included many years of service. In addition to serving as MMTC Chair, she became PSG Chair-elect in 1996, during which she created the PSG Handbook to guide the activities of the Executive Council and future annual meeting organizers. She served as Chair of the Executive Council in 1997 and Past-Chair in 1998. Kim has served on PSG's *Marine Ornithology* Steering Committee and Inland Survey Protocol Statistical Analysis Steering Committee. She is currently a member of the MMTC, the Kittlitz's

Murrelet Technical Committee, the 2020 Long-Range Strategic Planning Committee, and the Japan Seabird Conservation Committee.

The Pacific Seabird Group awarded the Special Achievement Award to Lora and Kim in honor of their long-term commitment to Pacific seabirds, and for their support of PSG throughout its history. In particular, they have made unique contributions to both PSG and seabirds by founding and sustaining the Marbled Murrelet Technical Committee.

### Ode to *Brachyramphus* by Mark J. Rauzon

(Delivered by Mark on the occasion of Kim Nelson's and Lora Leschner's Special Achievement Award, February 2008)



*Brachyramphus, Brachyramphus,*  
Fog lark of hoary tales.  
How they blame you, how they claim  
you ruin timber sales.

Little Marbled Murrelet, many you inspire,  
More than that, you launch careers with many's fist new hire.  
The list is long, perhaps too long to mention,  
Suffice to say some get pay and look forward to a healthy pension.

Like Lora Leschner with the State,  
Others tho are left to fate,  
Eking a living out on a limb  
If you don't believe me, ask Nelson,  
Kim.

*Brachyramphus, Brachyramphus!*  
flying in the dark  
Fly away out to sea,  
just don't fly into my park

Forest Service, Fish and Game,  
And many feds galore  
Do not want you—do not need you.  
Trouble them no more.

They see the mounting legal fees  
And pressure from the industry.  
Not mention Julia Butterfly  
in Luna the ancient redwood tree.

Little Marbled Murrelet, many you survived.  
Watching from your highest perch as each and all arrived.  
Pacific Lumber, Maxxam and other fat aristocrats.  
Took their turn taking profit by fragmenting your critical habitats.

As Friesen's new genetic forms evened the score,  
Clinton's Forest Plans flew out the door,  
A new day is dawning. The sun sets on the urge to delist.  
So Big John Piatt says, "Enough *Brachyramphus!* Let's go get pissed."

# CONSERVATION REPORT

Compiled by Craig S. Harrison

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This Conservation Report was received on 16 November 2009. Due to publication delay, some information may be out of date, which is not the fault of the compiler or contributors. Updates will appear in *Pacific Seabirds* 36(2).

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## LAYSAN ALBATROSS COLONY DESTROYED IN HAWAII

Wildlife biologists monitoring a little-known Laysan Albatross (*Phoebastria immutabilis*) colony at Kuaokala in the Northern Waianae Mountains, Oahu, discovered in late March 2009 that the entire colony of 50 birds had suddenly disappeared. The colony had been fenced to exclude predators such as pigs and dogs and monitored for six years. When predation has occurred in the past, remains are typically scattered throughout the colony, allowing biologists to identify the responsible predator. At their last visit in mid-February, Lindsay Young and her colleagues counted 15 chicks, six nests with eggs and 20 adults present in the colony. When she returned in March, she found no chicks and only 3 adults that had not been seen previously on the colony. There were no feathers, bones, or carcasses. Since this is the period when the non-breeding birds arrive and court on the colony, even if all the chicks had been eaten (which is unlikely because the area is fenced), the non-breeding adults should still be coming back to the colony and carcasses should have been found. Apparently this was the result of foul play by humans who carefully executed all birds in the colony while covering all their traces. Despite searches by state and federal biologists, assisted by dogs, no incriminating evidence has been found. However, the fact that the colony is situated above a small airplane field suggests a motive. It took almost 20 years for this Kuaokala colony to reach a population of 50 birds; it may take another 20 years for

it to recover this time. Fortunately, the larger colony at Kaena Point (see article below) remains intact.

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## PROTECTION OF SEABIRDS AT KAENA POINT, HAWAII

PSG has again written the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources to support the erection of a predator-exclusion fence at Kaena Point, the northernmost tip of Oahu. The fence is designed to eliminate predation by dogs, cats, mongooses, and rats on seabirds at the Kaena Point Natural Area Reserve. PSG first supported this project at its preliminary stages in January 2008 (*Pacific Seabirds* 35:35, 2008). We commented again as part of public hearing process scheduled for October 2009, which should result in issuance of the permit in time for the fence to be completed before the Laysan Albatross breeding season of winter 2009-2010.

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## AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS (ACAP)

PSG wrote Senator Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and Congressman Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) during August 2009 to request their support for the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and

Petrels (ACAP). Specifically, we urged Boxer and Rahall to support the U.S. acceding to ACAP and enacting legislation to implement the agreement. Boxer and Rahall are key members of Congress because of their positions as chairs of the Senate Environment and House Natural Resources committees.

ACAP is an international treaty, whose fundamental goal is to maintain healthy populations of albatrosses and petrels. It works to achieve these goals through research, monitoring and conservation measures, such as reduction of incidental mortality in fisheries and maintenance of habitats (*Pacific Seabirds* 35:10, 2008).

PSG explained that joining ACAP would not only allow the United States to show its commitment to protecting 28 species of albatrosses and petrels on a global scale, but would also enhance conservation of species that are protected by other U.S. statutes, including the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Endangered Species Act. Since ACAP was opened for signatures in 2001, eleven countries have become parties to it: Australia, Brazil, Chile, France, New Zealand, Peru, the United Kingdom, Spain, Ecuador, South Africa, and Argentina. PSG stated its belief that it is important for the United States to become a party to ACAP as soon as possible. The United States has been a global leader in protecting seabirds through reducing seabird by catch and protecting and restoring breeding sites. Joining ACAP provides an important opportunity for the U.S. to demonstrate its commitment to seabird conservation on a global scale, and to join like-minded nations in conservation efforts that will

## CONSERVATION REPORT

benefit species where they are at risk outside the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone. As a member of ACAP, the United States could directly influence priority and policy for ACAP, and could ensure that lessons our country has learned are applied elsewhere. U.S. government employees currently attend ACAP meetings only as observers, so their influence in the organization is limited. Ratifying ACAP will give U.S. representatives a stronger voice within ACAP.

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### ALASKA REJECTS LISTING KITTLITZ'S MURRELET

PSG wrote in March 2009 to Denby S. Lloyd, Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), to suggest that the Kittlitz's Murrelet (*Brachyramphus brevirostris*) be listed under the Alaska Endangered Species Act (*Pacific Seabirds* 35:34, 2008). PSG expressed concern that the long-term survival of the species is at risk, because there is evidence of steep annual declines in its core population areas in Alaska during the last few decades. While the ultimate cause of the decline is unknown, PSG noted that if current trends continue, Kittlitz's Murrelets may be extirpated in core areas of their range within the next two decades. PSG also urged that, whether or not ADF&G ultimately decides to list this species as endangered, it should conduct a status review of Kittlitz's Murrelets, with the active participation of scientists, and of stakeholders who could be affected by management programs that could result from a determination that the species is endangered. PSG specifically invited the Department to do the following:

1. Develop a gillnet monitoring program in nearshore waters where murrelet densities are high and bycatch is a problem.

2. Test innovative gillnet fishing gear and methods to reduce bycatch mortality, and encourage the use of these

methods in areas of high overlap between salmon fishing and Kittlitz's Murrelets (e.g., Prince William Sound, Kodiak, Yakutat Bay).

3. Improve estimates of population sizes and trends of Kittlitz's Murrelets through extensive at-sea surveys and continued long-term monitoring in core areas.

4. Estimate reproductive performance, and other important population parameters such as survival, to determine the most important factors affecting population stability.

5. Develop a better understanding of foraging ecology, including nutritional requirements and the relationship of population parameters to prey availability.

6. Identify important areas occupied by Kittlitz's Murrelets during the non-breeding season, including molting areas and migratory pathways, to understand if any factors during these periods are contributing to the decline.

7. Examine genetic flow, variation, and population structure, which will allow estimation of effective population size and delineation of discrete subpopulations.

On 7 April 2009, ADF&G decided not to list the Kittlitz's Murrelet under the Alaska Endangered Species Act. Lloyd stated that there is insufficient evidence to show that murrelet numbers have decreased to such an extent that its continued existence is threatened. He also wrote that range-wide trends are uncertain and that surveys may be biased because researchers are misidentifying Kittlitz's Murrelets.

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### USFWS CONCLUDES MARBLED MURRELET STILL THREATENED

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced in mid-June 2009 that the Marbled Murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*) would remain listed as

threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). After a five-year status review, USFWS determined that the status of the bird in Oregon, Washington, and California has not changed and the recovery criteria for removing the species from the federal list of threatened and endangered species have not been met. A hotly disputed status review in 2004 concluded that the tri-state population was not a valid distinct population segment. USFWS did not delist the bird, and instead decided that the status review should be extended to include British Columbia and Alaska. Based on new information, USFWS concluded that the murrelet population south of the Canadian border is a discrete population and should remain listed. The population in the coterminous United States is much smaller than in Canada: 18,000 birds in the tri-state region vs. 66,000 in British Columbia. The breeding success of the murrelet also is lower in the three states than in Canada. The tri-state population faces a range of threats, including nesting habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, and predation.

In July 2009, the U.S. Circuit Court of the District of Columbia dismissed the timber industry's lawsuit challenging the Marbled Murrelet's status as a threatened species. The court ruled that the issue was moot because USFWS had found that the bird still merits protection in Washington, Oregon and Northern California. The American Forest Resource Council stated that it still believes food shortages in the ocean are a bigger problem for the birds than limited nesting habitat.

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### PSG OBJECTS TO WIND FARM ON RADAR RIDGE, WASHINGTON

PSG wrote to the Washington Department of Natural Resources in June 2009 to express its concerns about a proposal to locate a wind energy facility

## CONSERVATION REPORT

on state land at Radar Ridge in Pacific County, Washington. The site is located within the Nemah Marbled Murrelet Management Area (MMMA). PSG discussed the impacts of this development on Marbled Murrelets, which are listed as threatened under the ESA. A wind power project at this location will likely result in direct mortality of murrelets that nest adjacent to the facility. There is also significant risk of long-term adverse effects on Marbled Murrelet conservation on a landscape that has been specifically identified as critical for species recovery. Most of the surrounding forestland is identified as critical nesting habitat, and it has been identified as important for long-term recovery of the Marbled Murrelet in the federal recovery plan and by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Marbled Murrelet Science Team.

PSG recognized the benefits of developing alternative sources of “green energy,” including wind power, but we strongly oppose locating wind turbines in this area. The Nemah MMMA was rated by the WDNR Science Team as the highest-scoring state lands for murrelet conservation in southwest Washington. Marbled Murrelet populations apparently are continuing to decline, and therefore they cannot sustain additional losses. Because the species feeds almost exclusively in coastal waters, adults make multiple daily flights during the breeding season (early April to mid-September) between their inland nesting area and coastal foraging areas. They would be exposed repeatedly to mortality in wind turbines if those were constructed in the area. Unless Marbled Murrelets are protected from further loss of suitable habitat, and threats to their survival are removed or minimized to allow for increased productivity, the species is likely to be extirpated in southwest Washington in the foreseeable future.

### MAJOR GRANT TO REMOVE RATS FROM PALAU AND FIJI

The Darwin Initiative announced in March 2009 that BirdLife International was awarded a large three-year grant to implement a project entitled “Restoration of Priority Pacific Island Ecosystems for People and Biodiversity.”

The work will focus on Palau and Fiji. The Darwin Initiative is based in the United Kingdom. The organization aims to assist countries that are rich in biodiversity, but not in financial resources, to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Most documented extinctions of Pacific island birds have been caused by invasive alien species. On the four-island atoll of Kayangel, Palau’s northernmost state, feral cats and rodents are a severe threat to the Micronesian Megapode (*Megapodius laperouse*) and other endangered species. Traditional knowledge of the Kayangel people indicates that at least 15 endemic or restricted-range bird species resided on the islands two decades ago; only three resident species were observed in 2004. The new project aims to eradicate rodents and cats from Kayangel, and to develop the capacity of the Government of Palau to remove invasive species elsewhere and prevent reintroductions. The local people and landowners on Kayangel will be involved at all stages of the project.

Invasive alien species are also widely recognized in the decline of Fiji’s biodiversity, especially its seabird colonies. Rodents have already been eradicated from nine islands in Fiji: Vatu-i-Ra, Mabualau, and the seven Ringgold islands. Mabualau hosts large populations of breeding Great Crested Terns (*Sterna bergii*), and Mabualau and Vatu-I-Ra hold more than 1% of the known global population of Black Noddy (*Anous minutus*). Communities have asked for assistance to develop protected area status for these islands,

to prevent reintroduction of alien species and unsustainable use of resources, and to enhance their tourism potential.

The project will establish a regional network of cat and rodent eradication practitioners. It will disseminate skills and best practices through a state-of-the-art media plan and a best-practice manual. By the end of the project, government staff and the Palau Conservation Society will have the capacity to carry out restoration on other islands and to perpetuate monitoring and bio-security measures in Palau. Community-based protected areas will be established on at least three islands in Palau and Fiji, and will be initiated at another ten islands, with management plans that include options for sustainable development.

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### UPDATE ON RAT ERADICATION FROM RAT ISLAND, ALASKA

USFWS and cooperators have undertaken a major project to eradicate invasive Norway rats (*Rattus norvegicus*) on Rat Island, Aleutian Islands, Alaska. The rodents had decimated native bird populations since their introduction 229 years ago from a Japanese sailing ship. In October 2008, baits containing the anticoagulant rodenticide brodifacoum were successfully broadcast on the island from helicopters (*Pacific Seabirds* 35:8, 2008). Intensive field monitoring on Rat Island in late May and early June 2009, and again in August, found no sign of rats. USFWS and its partners are cautiously optimistic that all of the rodents have been eradicated. If another year passes without a rat sighting, the team will declare the island rat-free for the first time in recorded history. Early signs of ecosystem recovery were documented, including nests and chicks of Black Oystercatchers (*Haematopus bachmani*), Glaucous-winged Gulls (*Larus glaucescens*), and Common Eiders (*Somateria*

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*mollissima*), and a first-time record of breeding seabirds on an offshore rock that was previously inhabited by rats. All bird species on the island except Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) are present in numbers similar to those found during pre-treatment surveys. Falcons and gulls were observed successfully nesting on the island, and several observations of live adult and sub-adult eagles were made. Genera such as murrelets (*Brachyramphus* and *Synthliboramphus*), storm-petrels (*Oceanodroma*) and puffins (*Fratercula*) are expected to recolonize the island in the coming years if the rat eradication has been a success.

The survey team collected a higher-than-expected number of carcasses of two non-target species: 213 Glaucous-winged Gulls and 43 Bald Eagles. About 75 percent of the eagle carcasses appeared to be juveniles. Bird carcasses and tissue samples were sent to the USFWS National Wildlife Health Center laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin. The lab found that livers of two Bald Eagles, two Glaucous-winged Gulls, one Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), and one Rock Sandpiper (*Calidris ptilocnemis*) all tested positive for brodifacoum. USFWS is analyzing the bird samples in order to understand the causes of mortality more fully, and will use the results to plan future operations in the Aleutians more effectively. In addition, soil and water samples from Rat Island will be analyzed to elucidate potential movement of the rodenticide in the ecosystem and its degradation into nontoxic compounds.

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### ASHY STORM-PETREL NEITHER ENDANGERED NOR THREATENED

USFWS announced in mid-August that it would not list the ashystorm-petrel (*Oceanodroma homochroa*) as

threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The agency stated in the *Federal Register* (47[159]:41832, 19 August 2009) that it had thoroughly reviewed all available scientific and commercial information in response to a petition to list the species by the Center for Biological Diversity. It asked the public to continue to submit any new information concerning the status of, and threats to, this species.

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### DELISTING OF THE CALIFORNIA BROWN PELICAN (CONTINUED)

The California Fish and Game Commission removed the California Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis californicus*) from the state list on 5 February 2009, the first species ever to have been deemed recovered by the State of California (*Pacific Seabirds* 35:34, 2008). In February 2008 the USFWS formally proposed to delist the species over its entire range (*Federal Register* 73[34]:9408, 20 February 2008]. PSG filed comments supporting the delisting in April 2008, and no conservation organization has opposed the action.

USFWS failed to meet the statutory deadline of February 2009 for making its decision; the agency was sued, and it entered into a consent decree whereby it agreed to make a decision by November 2009.

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### Bald Eagles Deplete Great Cormorant Population in Maine

Bald Eagle populations have recovered sharply in recent years from DDT poisoning. Now they are eating so many

chicks of the Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) that the U.S. population of this cormorant is threatened with extirpation. The eagles fly to Maine's remote rocky islands to snatch chicks from the only known Great Cormorant colonies in the US, apparently causing a decline from 250 pairs in 1992 to 80 pairs in 2009. John Drury, a Maine biologist, has been counting seabirds on the state's islands for more than 25 years. This year's population is the smallest since 1984, the year after they were first spotted on Maine islands. Without protection, Drury fears the Maine population could be extirpated. Although Great Cormorants are widespread from Europe to eastern Canada, they are uncommon in Maine, which represents their southern range in the Northwest Atlantic.

Young eagles are opportunistic feeders and will go after the easiest prey they can find. In Alaska, some eagles have shifted their diet from fish to seabirds; they eat young blue herons in the Midwest. In Maine, besides Great Cormorants, eagles are also consuming young Double-crested Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*), gulls (*Larus* spp.), Common Eiders, and loons (*Gavia* spp.).

At one time there were about 50,000 pairs of Bald Eagles in the U.S. After declines from hunting and habitat loss, widespread use of the pesticide DDT almost brought them to extinction. DDT accumulated in fish, a major food source for Bald Eagles, and caused them to lay eggs with weakened shells that broke in the nest. By 1963, there were only 417 pairs of eagles in the contiguous 48 states. The species began a gradual recovery after DDT was banned in the U.S. in 1972 and has grown to more than 10,000 pairs today.

On the ledges and remote islands along Maine's coast, eagles now eat all types of seabirds that until recently had no predators. Drury speculates that if fish were more plentiful, the eagles might not eat other birds. This summer Drury

## CONSERVATION REPORT

worked on Seal Island to chase bald eagles away from cormorant nests. Besides eating the young, eagles are driving the adults from their nests, leaving the eggs exposed to other predators. Cormorant eggs hatch in late May or early June, and chicks begin flying by mid-August.

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### NEW BERMUDA PETREL COLONY ESTABLISHED

The first Bermuda petrel (*Pterodroma cahow*) chick for almost 400 years has been reared on Nonsuch Island, Bermuda. The chick hatched in May 2009 as a result of a successful translocation program that began in 2004. The petrel, also known as the cahow, once numbered in the tens of thousands before the island's discovery by the Spanish in the early 1500s. The cahow was a major element in Bermuda's history, because the eerie sounds made at night by the island's huge cahow population frightened the superstitious Spanish sailors into believing that Bermuda was inhabited by devils, so they never settled on the island. Instead, the Spanish left pigs on the island as food for shipwrecked sailors. During the ensuing century, the pigs destroyed almost 90% of the cahow population, rooting up the bird's nest burrows and eating the petrels. When the English settled Bermuda in 1609, cahows survived only on remote islands. Due to hunting by the early settlers, and predation by rats, cats and dogs that they brought to Bermuda, the remaining cahows disappeared very quickly. The species was thought to be extinct by the 1620s. No cahows were seen until 1951, when a few breeding pairs were discovered nesting on some of the smallest and most remote rocky islands.

David Wingate, now retired from the Bermuda Government Parks Department, has been the guiding force for the conservation of cahows since 1951. He devoted 50 years of his life to saving

the species. After rats were removed from Nonsuch Island, 105 cahow chicks were transplanted there between 2004 and 2008 in the hope of establishing a new breeding population. The first of these now fully-grown cahows returned in 2008 to Nonsuch. Four birds were recaptured while prospecting new nests and were identified by their tags as having left Nonsuch in 2005. One pair has now bred successfully. More cahows also are being seen on pelagic trips out of North Carolina.

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### USFWS LISTS SIX FOREIGN SEABIRDS UNDER ESA

After proposing in December 2007 to list three Pacific seabirds as endangered (*Pacific Seabirds* 34:54, 2007), USFWS listed them in June 2009. They are the Chatham Petrel (*Pterodroma axillaris*), Fiji Petrel (*Pterodroma macgillivrayi*) and Magenta Petrel (*Pterodroma magentae*). In addition, the agency declared three seabirds as threatened: the Cook's Petrel (*Pterodroma cookii*), Galapagos Petrel (*Pterodroma phaeopygia*) and Heinroth's Shearwater (*Puffinus heinrothi*). These species rarely occur in U.S. waters; however, listing of foreign birds under the Endangered Species Act facilitates financial assistance to international efforts for conservation of the species, and it enables U.S. restrictions under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES). There was a delay in listing, during which USFWS classified them "candidate species"—meaning that the agency acknowledged that the species need federal protection, but that it has decided to list other species that are more imminently threatened with extinction before dealing with the candidates.

### PROPOSED HARBOR DEVELOPMENT IN MANZANILLO, MEXICO

PSG wrote the Commission for Environmental Cooperation in Montréal, Canada in April 2009 to express its concerns about plans to develop harbor facilities in the vicinity of Manzanillo, Colima, México. Harbor construction would potentially degrade a natural coastal lagoon system, Laguna Cuyutlán. PSG noted that its comments would also apply to similar developments that might be proposed at similar sites on the west coast of México.

The coastal estuarine and marine systems off western México, such as Laguna Cuyutlán, represent critical habitats for nesting seabirds such as Laughing Gulls (*Leucophaeus atricilla*), Magnificent Frigatebirds (*Fregata magnificens*), Black Skimmers (*Rhynops niger*), Royal (*Sterna maxima*), Least (*S. antillarum*), Gull-billed (*S. nilotica*), and Forster's Terns (*S. forsteri*), and Brown Pelicans. They are also crucial for wading birds and waterfowl that migrate to México and beyond for part of the year. The potential loss or degradation of any of these systems would be an international conservation concern, due to expected impacts on the population sizes of wetland-dependent birds.

PSG recognized the exceptional conservation values of Laguna Cuyutlán. We also stated that the project potentially violates international agreements to protect these values, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Migratory Bird Treaty between México and the USA, and the stated goals of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation. PSG has therefore strongly urged that Laguna Cuyutlán and similar systems under threat of biological degradation or destruction of wetland ecosystems be preserved.

PSG recommended that appropriate authorities in México undertake a detailed environmental impact analysis to: (1) accurately and extensively document and record critical biodiversity and

## CONSERVATION REPORT

critical habitats throughout the general area, as well as their ecology; (2) predict potential impacts of all proposed development schemes; and (3) recommend actions necessary to eliminate or minimize any habitat degradations, and to maintain the hydrological and ecological integrity of the entire lagoon and its associated wetlands.

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### GALÁPAGOS PENGUINS INFECTED WITH MALARIA

Biologists have found the malaria parasite (*Plasmodium* sp.) in about 5% of 362 Galápagos Penguins (*Spheniscus mendiculus*) sampled throughout the nine-island archipelago. All of the birds appeared to be healthy, but avian malaria is a problem in penguin exhibits at zoos. The mosquitoes that can carry *Plasmodium* arrived on the archipelago

in the 1980s, presumably on incoming boats or flights.

The population of Galápagos Penguins may be declining for reasons unrelated to avian malaria. Reductions in fish numbers during El Niño seasons can reduce the penguin population in the Galápagos by up to 80%. Although the population has been rising since the major El Niño event of 1997-98, it has attained only half its prior size.

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### TASMAN BOOBY NOT EXTINCT

The Tasman Booby (*Sula tasmani*) was first described in 1988 from fossils found on Lord Howe and Norfolk Islands, off the east coast of Australia. It was considered to be extinct—apparently most birds were consumed by Polynesian settlers in the 13th century, and it was finished off in the late 18th century by European sailors. The bones of extinct

and modern boobies in the North Tasman Sea were very similar, but the modern birds were clearly larger.

A team of geneticists, paleontologists and naturalists has discovered in the laboratory that the bird is alive today, among its fossil ancestors on the Australian islands and on New Zealand's Kermadec Islands. The modern Tasman Booby is *S. d. fullagari*, which was first described in 1990. Geneticist Tammy Steeves, of the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, and her colleagues found a perfect match between DNA fragments from six Tasman Booby fossils and the DNA from living birds. They also found that the size of fossil and living specimens overlap; earlier workers had inadvertently compared males from modern birds with female fossils, but the subspecies has strong sexual size dimorphism. The subspecies will now be called *S. d. tasmani*, since that name has priority. The work appeared in *Biology Letters* for August 2009 (<http://rsbl.royalsocietypublishing.org>, accessed 6 Sep 2009.)

# PSG MEETINGS

## 36TH ANNUAL PSG MEETING IN HAKODATE, HOKKAIDO, JAPAN

The Pacific Seabird Group held its first meeting outside North America on 22-25 February 2009 at the Hakodate Kokusai Hotel, Hakodate, Japan. The conference was a huge success, thanks to Local Organizing Committee and its chair, Yutaka Watanuki, and to Scientific Chair Greg Balogh. In addition, our hosts provided us with delightful social and cultural experiences.

One hundred seventy-seven participants from 11 countries attended 95 papers and viewed 37 posters. There were three plenary lectures: Rory Wilson opened the scientific meeting with his paper “Linking Energy with Strategy: a Penguin Perspective on Foraging”; Haruo Ogi provided a historical perspective in “Pelagic Seabird’s Biology: A Short Story of Many Past Studies”; and Hiroshi Hasegawa summarized decades of conservation research in “Population Monitoring and Conservation of the

Short-tailed  
Albatross on  
Torishima,  
Japan.”

The first session was a symposium, “Working Beneath the Surface: New Approaches in Examining the Interplay of Biomechanics, Physiology, and Behavioral Ecology



Dr. Haruo Ogi with Lifetime Achievement Award



Dr. Yutaka Watanuki with Special Achievement Award

in Diving Seabirds.” Special paper sessions included “Righting Wrongs: Seabird Restoration,” “Albatross Conservation: Saving the Leviathans of the Sky,” “The Cormorants are Coming,” “Mine! Mine! Mine!: The Gull Session,” “To Everything, Tern, Tern, Tern,” and “Don’t Catch Me If You Can: Seabird Bycatch.”

The day before the scientific meeting, the public was invited to a special symposium, “Ocean Environment through a Seabird’s View.”

### Awards

At the Annual Banquet on 25 February, PSG was honored to present its Lifetime Achievement Award to Haruo Ogi, a founding member of PSG. Yutaka Watanuki received PSG’s 2009 Special Achievement Award. Bob Day presented the award to Dr. Ogi, and Jim Lovvorn presented Dr. Watanuki’s award. Tributes to both awardees will appear in an upcoming issue of *Pacific Seabirds*.



Meeting poster at hotel entrance.

Twenty-five papers and seven posters by students were eligible for student awards. The best student presentations were by Alex Bond and Yukiko Inoue; Takashi Yamamoto and Nathan Hostetter received honorable mentions.

A record number of travel grants were awarded to help people attend the meeting, ranging from US\$344 to US\$1000. Seven scientists received awards: Alexander Andreev, Yuri Artyukhin, and Anna Klenova (Russia); Charles Cheng and Julia Hsiang-Wen (Republic of China [Taiwan]); Young-Soo Kwon (Republic of Korea [South Korea]); and Chuhua Chen (People’s Republic of China).

Travel awards went to five North American students: Alex Bond, Rachel Buxton, and Kyle Muirhead (Canada), and Grant Humphries and Emily Weiser (USA). Three awards were received by students from the United Kingdom: Kate Ashbrook, Samuel Riou, and Miran Kim. Finally, the Local Organizing Committee raised funds for the travel of another

## MEETING NEWS • Hakodate, February 2009

eight students: Rei Yamashita, Nobuo Kokubun, Takashi Yamamoto, Tadashi Tajima, Yuichi Mizutani, Hidenori Fujii, Naoki Tomita, and Nobuhiro Katumata.

The silent auction raised over US\$1440, which will go towards travel awards for students wishing to attend future PSG meetings.

### SOCIAL EVENTS

Many of us chose to partake in two special dinners arranged by the Local Organizing Committee, at the Goto-ken and Chikuba Shinyotei restaurants. All dinners featured delectable and beautifully served Japanese cuisine. Western scientists received their indoctrination to Japan's karaoke culture, much to the amusement and enjoyment of their fellow would-be singers. Although vocal talent was largely lacking, participants and attendees were laughing with rather than at each other. There was also an opportunity to experience a traditional *onsen*, or bath, in the Yunokawa hot spring. The Annual Banquet at the hotel was another sumptuous experience. In addition to award ceremonies, banquet attendees were treated to the local traditional Squid Dance, and many joined in.

### FIELD TRIPS

There were three outstanding field trips. The pre-conference trip on 18-21 February crossed southern Hokkaido

by train. We stayed in three small hotels, each with its own hot springs. High points included wintering Red-crowned Cranes (*Grus japonensis*), a glimpse of the endangered Blakiston's Fish Owl (*Bubo blakistoni*), and a boat trip from the Shiretoko Peninsula that yielded Steller's Sea-Eagle and White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus pelagicus* and *H. albicilla*). There were many other new birds, from dippers to ducks. Those of us who learned birding before the electronic age were "blown away" when one of the student guides corrected our identification of a hawk within an hour—by sending its photo to an expert via cell phone. (It was a Mountain Hawk-Eagle, *Nisaetus nipalensis*.) Other stops included a conservation research station and a center for Ainu culture. Besides all this, we enjoyed views of Hokkaido's snow-covered hills, forests, and farms.

A post-conference field trip took us to the Shimokita Peninsula on Honshu,



PSG Dinner at Chikuba Shinyotei Restaurant, Hokkaido.



where we watched wild Japanese monkeys (*Macaca fuscata*) in their ordinary lives—eating grass, caring for their young, bickering. . . . We also enjoyed birding in the forest and views of fishing villages.

The city of Hakodate provided fascinating sights, of course, such as old and new buildings and temples. Some PSGers played hooky from a few talks to go birding in a forested park. A day-long field trip after the conference took us around the town, to a national park, and to a kelp museum.

Some finished the trip with a day of sightseeing and birding in Tokyo, particularly at the Meiji Shrine Park.



The Squid Dance: local experts performed; then PSG joined in . . .



. . . Craig Harrison, Charlene McAlister, Hiroshi Hasegawa, Bill Sydeman.

### SPONSORS

Major sponsors of PSG'S meeting in Hakodate included the City of Hakodate; the Graduate School of Fisheries Science, Hokkaido University; the Japan

## MEETING NEWS • Hakodate, February 2009

Society for the Promotion of Science; the Japanese Ministry of the Environment; the National Research Institute of Far

Seas Fisheries; the Nippon Foundation; and the Ocean Research Institutes, The University of Tokyo. The Commonweal

Ocean Policy Program provided major support for travel by scientists.



Meakan Volcano, Hokkaido. By Ron LeValley (other photos by V.M. Mendenhall).



Outdoor *onsen* (hot spring) at Meto, central Hokkaido. The shy person is bathing *au naturel*.



Shinto shrine, Meiji Park, Tokyo



Traditional house, Hakodate

## WORLD SEABIRD CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER 2010, VICTORIA, B.C.

The first-ever World Seabird Conference will take place 7-11 September 2010, in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. The Pacific Seabird Group is host for the conference. Twenty-eight other seabird groups worldwide are participating formally, including groups based in on both sides of the Atlantic, in Africa, the Indian Ocean, East Asia, Australasia, the Arctic and Antarctic, and special groups for albatrosses and other species. The International Organizing Committee includes one or more members from each supporting group.

Primary symposia will include “Climate Change: Comparative Ecosystem Dynamics of the World’s Oceans,” “Interactions between Seabirds and

Fisheries: a Global Perspective,” “Spatial Ecology at Sea: Opportunities and Challenges for Seabird Marine Protected Areas,” and “Seabird Island Ecology and Restoration: a Global Synthesis.” There will be special paper sessions on the interactions of stressors on seabirds, microevolution, marine debris, seabird demography, technological innovation, long-term monitoring, conservation genetics, managing forage fisheries, and links between seabird conservation and the economy. There will also be many contributed papers and posters.

Workshops will be held in conjunction with the symposia and special paper sessions. Additional workshops are planned on seabird colony and at-sea

databases, monitoring of ecosystems through seabird mortality, seabirds as indicators, and formation of a Global Seabird Governing Body.

The conference is being held in the Victoria Conference Centre. Accommodation will be at the adjacent Fairmont Empress Hotel. The Local Committee chair is Patrick O’Hara, assisted by Shelagh Bucknell as coordinator.

The Pacific Seabird Group is the host organization for the World Seabird Conference. Most events will be international in theme; however, the conference will count as PSG’s 38th Annual Meeting.

For further information, and to register and book accommodations, see <http://www.worldseabirdconference.com>

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## OTHER PSG MEETINGS

### PSG’S 37TH ANNUAL MEETING IN LONG BEACH, FEBRUARY 2010

The Pacific Seabird Group held its 37th Annual Meeting in Long Beach, California on 17-21 February 2010. An excellent scientific program was organized by Chair-elect Tom Good, and the Local Committee did a superb job under chair Jennifer Boyce. PSG bestowed its Lifetime Achievement Award on Dan

Anderson and the Special Achievement Award on Frank Gress. A complete account of the Long Beach meeting will appear in an upcoming issue.

### PSG TO MEET IN HAWAI’I, FEBRUARY 2012

PSG’s 39th Annual Meeting will be held on Oahu, Hawai’i, in February 2012. The exact dates have not been

determined. Chair of the Local Committee will be Lindsay Young.

There will be no PSG meeting in 2011, because both the 37th and 38th meetings will have occurred in 2010. (The same thing has happened several times in the past—two PSG meetings in one year and none the next year. For those with a penchant for history, the previous two-meeting years were 1978, 1980, 1984, and 1995.)

# EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MINUTES

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The Pacific Seabird Group's Executive Council (EXCO) meets at each winter Annual Meeting and during the summer by conference call. A meeting's Minutes are available after they are approved at the next EXCO meeting: a summary in *Pacific Seabirds*, and the full text on PSG's website ([www.pacificseabirds.org](http://www.pacificseabirds.org)). Following are summaries for Summer 2008, Winter 2009, and Summer 2007; the latter was omitted earlier by mistake.

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## SUMMARY OF MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING OF THE PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP 18 September 2008, by Telephone Conference Call

### Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the February 2008 EXCO Meeting at Blaine, Washington were approved.

### Budget report from the Blaine meeting

Ron LeValley, Treasurer, reported that a few small details remain to be finalized, but that the meeting in Blaine netted about \$12,000 for PSG.

### PSG's Fiscal Year 2009 budget

Ron LeValley reported that PSG remains financially healthy, even with a decrease of about \$20,000 in total assets since Fiscal Year 2008 (which ends on 1 October). The 2009 budget was approved.

### Planning for the World Seabird Conference

David Irons updated the Executive Council on progress related to the 2010 World Seabird Conference in Victoria, BC. Twenty-three seabird groups are supporting the conference, with at least one member from each group on the Organizing Committee. Proposals for symposia and session topics will go out this fall. Fundraising is now the top priority. EXCO decided that there would be no PSG awards ceremony at the WCS; student awards will be discussed at the international conference level.

EXCO discussed PSG's role as sponsor for the WSC and the relative risk/reward associated with potential conference financial profits and losses. Joanna Smith reported that the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) of 10-11 people is hard at work on publicity and

fundraising. The budget for the conference will be presented to EXCO at its February 2009 meeting. EXCO discussed whether it would be worth the cost to hire a conference organizer; the LOC will make a decision on this soon.

### Conservation Small Grants

Craig Harrison reported that two grants had recently been awarded (\$2,000 for a seabird bycatch project in Guatemala, \$4,000 for a study of at-sea distribution in Indonesia).

### Formation of Kittlitz's Murrelet Technical Committee

The EXCO voted to establish a Kittlitz's Murrelet Technical Committee, with Michelle Kissling as Chair.

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## SUMMARY OF MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING OF THE PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP Hakodate Kokusai Hotel, Hakodate, Hokkaido, Japan 22 and 25 February 2009

### PSG ADMINISTRATION

#### Minutes

The minutes of the conference call meeting of 18 September 2008 were approved.

EXCO voted to approve two corrections to the minutes of the February 2008 meeting. The full Minutes were approved in September 2008, but omissions were discovered afterwards. [The corrected Minutes were published in *Pacific Seabirds* 35(1).]

#### Report from the PSG Chair

Doug Bertram reported that PSG sent nine letters during 2008-2009, commenting on seabird conservation issues and supporting a grant application by PSG:

## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MINUTES

- March 2008—State of Alaska plan “Wildlife and People at Risk,” to keep rats out of the state
- April 2008—proposed delisting of the Brown Pelican under the U.S. Endangered Species Act
- June 2008—environmental assessment of seabird restoration project on San Nicolas Island, California
- September 2008—grant application by PSG’s Small-grant Fund to the Packard Foundation
- September 2008—proposed revision of critical habitat for the Marbled Murrelet under the U.S. Endangered Species Act
- October 2008—Marine Conservation Management Areas
- November 2008—proposed Marine Reserves/Marine Protected Areas offshore of Oregon
- November 2008—proposed Elliott State Forest Habitat Conservation Plan
- December 2008—U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s finding on a petition to delist the California, Oregon, and Washington population of the Marbled Murrelet under the U.S. Endangered Species Act

### Report from the Treasurer

Ron LeValley reported that PSG’s membership is steady, and there is one new life member.

PSG’s investment funds include the Endowment Fund, Conservation Fund, and Student Travel Awards. If donors specify a fund, their money goes there; donations without a specific allocation have been going into the Endowment Fund. The Treasurer agreed to post suggestions on the Listserve twice a year that members donate to PSG.

The Endowment Fund decreased by \$35,040 during the last year, due to unrealized gains/losses as the market dropped; it is now worth \$107,000. We can spend the fund’s principal in excess of \$100,000 on publications; thus we currently have \$7000 to spend, if we want. We have not spent any Endowment Fund money in the past couple of years.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service gave PSG a grant for publishing this meeting’s symposium on diving seabirds in *Marine Ornithology*. That symposium is now being published elsewhere; it was suggested that we use the money to publish another symposium in *Marine Ornithology*.

Some people joined field trips at this meeting who are not PSG members or were not even registered for the meeting. The EXCO discussed whether we should require field trip participants to join PSG and/or register for the meeting (some organizations have such a requirement).

Family memberships appear to have declined. Ron LeValley said that membership accounting is not an exact science; many members are kept on the rolls up to one year after their last dues were paid. A change in member numbers less than  $\pm 10$  isn’t meaningful.

### PSG Handbook

The PSG secretary is responsible for updating the Handbook. If anyone has additions, revisions, updates, or corrections, please send them to Mark Hipfner.

### PUBLICATIONS AND COMMUNICATION

#### Publications Committee

Coordinator Pat Jodice announced that *Marine Ornithology* files will now be available the webpage of the Searchable Ornithological Research Archive (SORA), but they will also remain on *Marine Ornithology*’s webpage.

A motion was passed to change the name of the Publications Committee the Communications Committee. The committee will include (but not be limited to) the Website Coordinator, Listserve Coordinator, *Marine Ornithology* managing editor, and *Pacific Seabirds* editor.

#### Marine Ornithology

PSG underwrote publication of *Marine Ornithology* with \$6000 in Fiscal Year 2008.

The journal will be publishing two symposia in the near future: on the Salish Sea (from PSG’s meeting of February 2008), and from the first Indian Ocean Seabird Conference. Both are fully funded for publication. They support *Marine Ornithology*’s standing as an international journal.

The journal receives plenty of submissions, although material from Europe is sparse (even though seabird groups in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands are among its supporting partners).

Tony Gaston is looking for a replacement as Managing Editor when he retires in two years. He will write up important points for editing and publishing the journal, for the benefit of his successor.

#### Pacific Seabirds

Vivian Mendenhall (*Pacific Seabirds* editor) reported that publication costs were about \$6200 for two issues in the past year. Publication is behind schedule because she neglected to remind people to write articles on recipients of PSG’s awards. Hard copies of *Pacific Seabirds* will only be sent after next year to institutions and others who request them.

About 6 issues of *Pacific Seabirds* are missing from PSG’s website. EXCO expressed concern that each issue needs to be published on the website at the same time as hard copies are mailed, so it’s available to all subscribers.

#### PSG’s Listserve

The Listserve Coordinator, Verena Gill, reported that a number of people have asked to join the Listserve, but not PSG. Should we just keep it to members, or allow others to join—which would benefit PSG? It was agreed that we should assess how membership has changed since the beginning of the Listserve.

Should PSG’s Listserve be moderated (i.e., should material be reviewed and sometimes filtered before being posted)? There were some complaints recently about a lengthy and passionate

## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MINUTES

discussion that appeared on the Listserve. Verena explained that she has always reviewed material before posting it. There was much discussion; members mentioned that other listserve without some controls have “imploded.” EXCO passed a motion that PSG’s Listserve Coordinator is authorized to moderate input to the listserve. The coordinator may decline a posting by any individual, at his/her discretion, if content is outside the scope of PSG’s mission or business, or in response to complaints about postings in a particular discussion. If anyone’s postings are declined, that person will be informed of the fact.

The Listserve Coordinator was added to the Communications Committee.

### PSG MEETINGS

#### Local Committee for the Hakodate conference

Yutaka Watanuki thanked everyone for coming. So far, 177 individuals have registered, which is more than expected.

#### Annual PSG Meeting in Long Beach, 17-21 Feb 2010

Jennifer Boyce, chair of the Local Committee, reported on progress to date.

Some EXCO members were concerned that with two PSG meetings in 2010 (Long Beach in February and the World Seabird Conference in September), one or both might be under-subscribed and could lose money. Other members pointed out that PSG has had two meetings in a few previous years (and no meeting the succeeding year, i.e. an average of one meeting per year). EXCO decided to explore the option of rescheduling the 2010 meeting to early 2011; it will be discussed with the Local Committee in the near future. [Editor’s note: we went ahead with the meeting in February 2010, as originally scheduled.]

#### World Seabird Conference, September 2010, Victoria, BC

The WSC Science Committee (David Irons, Dan Roby, Lisa Ballance, and Bill Sydeman) reported that 21 seabird groups are formal supporters of the meeting. Proposals for symposia are being reviewed; there will be 36 sessions, about 15 of which will be symposia.

Two journals have volunteered to publish symposia (*Marine Ornithology* and *Emu*); these will be appropriate, but EXCO discussed whether other journals should also share the bounty.

EXCO requested monthly updates from WSC committees.

Co-chairs of the WSC Local Committee (Jo Smith and Louise Blight) reviewed progress to date. WSC is tentatively committed to a block of 200 rooms. Blight and Smith will step down as co-chairs as of 1 March. EXCO discussed two excellent candidates for chair of the Local Committee; one of them, Patrick O’Hara, was approved by EXCO as interim chair.

EXCO was asked to approve basic expenditures of US\$164,352 (for 430 participants, i.e. \$381 per person). This would be reduced by about \$7,000 if the Canadian government refunds its goods and services tax. Expenses could be increased if fund-raising is successful (e.g., travel awards, evening receptions, new or expanded seabird databases). The WSC would be in the black under the basic budget, including the costs of conference organizer. If 600 people attended, the profit would change very little.

An event organizer would charge \$27,500 from now until 2010, and would provide two full-time people at the meeting. An event organizer has already been contracted for short-term assistance and has saved the Local Committee around CDN\$10,000.

EXCO approved some cost-saving measures for the WSC; they decided not to offer registration kits, shoulder bags, or morning coffee (unless there is a contractual agreement for the latter).

EXCO voted to put any profit from the WSC into a “seed fund” for future

World Seabird Conferences, and potentially towards products from the 2010 meeting (as they become defined).

#### Annual PSG Meeting in Oahu, Hawai‘i, 2012

EXCO approved a 2012 meeting on Oahu. Lindsay Young has already volunteered to chair the Local Committee, and others are volunteering to help.

### PSG COMMITTEE REPORTS

[Please also see the following annual reports elsewhere in this issue: Japanese Seabird Conservation Committee, Xantus’s Murrelet Technical Committee, and Craig S. Harrison Small-Grants Committee.]

#### Seabird Monitoring Committee

Scott Hatch reported on the committee’s annual meeting earlier in the day. The website is up, including data-entry software; however, most data that have been entered so far still need review by the database managers and have not been posted. A grant proposal was submitted to the North Pacific Research Board for funding to review data, but it was rejected without review because of page formatting. Scott hopes to raise awareness of the database at next year’s World Seabird Conference, and to interest more researchers in contributing data, maybe by establishing a working group. He views the website *Seabirds.net* as generically owned by all seabird organizations across the world.

#### Corresponding Members Committee

Selected researchers in non-North American countries are offered Corresponding Memberships, without dues but with a request for reports on their work. Craig Harrison stated (for coordinator Malcolm Coulter) that we have eight Corresponding Members: two from Colombia, and one each from Peru, Ecuador, the People’s Republic of China, Reunion Island (France), Fiji, and South Africa.

## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MINUTES

### Craig S. Harrison Conservation Fund for small grants

A motion was passed that, between now and 30 April, PSG's General Fund will match all donations to the fund,

up to a maximum of \$5,000. [Also see Small Grant Fund report in this issue]

### Loon/Grebe Technical Committee

The committee did not submit a report for this EXCO meeting. EXCO

will contact the coordinator and discuss PSG's requirement that each committee needs to submit an annual report on its activities.

## SUMMARY OF MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING OF THE PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP 18 September 2007, By Telephone Conference Call

### Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the February 2008 EXCO Meeting at Asilomar, California were approved.

since there are no alternative restaurants nearby. It was agreed that room rates for our conference reservation at Semiahmoo were reasonable.

preparing items for publication would help make publication more timely. It was agreed that the Secretary will compile the summary of minutes for each EXCO meeting; the Past Chair will follow up on articles that presenters of the Lifetime and Special Achievement Awards are supposed to write; and one of the regional representatives will help edit all the reports each fall (and will be listed as an Assistant Editor for that issue).

### Budget report from the Asilomar meeting of February 2007

Ron LeValley reported on costs for registration and other components of annual PSG Meetings, and the consistent tendency for the meetings to produce surplus revenue. The EXCO agreed that the current system works well; some future meeting could lose money, so a good policy is to maintain price structures that usually generate surpluses, as a buffer against occasional losses.

The EXCO discussed, but did not decide, whether it's worthwhile to distribute trinkets to registrants, such as cloth bags, mugs, or flash disks.

### Criteria for rejecting an abstract that is submitted for an annual meeting

A motion was passed unanimously to protect authors from having their papers rejected due to bias rather than on scientific grounds. Protocols for reviewing abstracts will be developed and added to the PSG Handbook.

### Budget for Fiscal Year 2008

Ron LeValley presented a draft budget for the fiscal year that began on 1 October, based on the past year's balance. An item was added for \$4500 to cover travel and expenses for the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award. The budget was approved.

### Chair of the Marbled Murrelet Technical Committee

Danielle Escene was welcomed as the new chair.

### Relations with the southeast Asian seabird community

The EXCO would like to promote active relationships with seabird researchers in Taiwan, Japan, China, and other nations. There is already a Japan Seabird Committee. Possibilities were discussed for a Southeast Asia Working Group or a Regional Representative. It was agreed to offer non-voting gift memberships to PSG for attendees at the upcoming Taiwan meeting.

### Planning for PSG's 2008 Annual Meeting in Blaine, Washington

It was agreed after discussion that the 3% charge for registering online was reasonable (people who prefer not to pay by credit card can pay by check). Meals will be included in registration costs,

The Publications Committee has existed for years, but it is not well defined. It was agreed that its members and chair would be firmly defined at the Semiahmoo meeting.

*Pacific Seabirds* is one issue behind schedule, and the editor (Vivian Mendenhall) suggested that assistance on

### Planning for the World Seabird Conference (September 2010)

Jo Smith reported that good progress is being made. The target is for 600 attendees. The meeting will be held at the Victoria Conference Centre, Victoria, British Columbia; the Local Organizing Committee is negotiating with local hotels.

# COMMITTEE REPORTS

PSG's committees report each year to the Executive Council. These reports for 2007 were submitted in February 2008. A full list of PSG committees appears at the back of this issue

## JAPANESE SEABIRD CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Motohiro Ito and John Fries

The committee met during the Japan Ornithological Science Meeting. Three special talks were held at that conference, on the Short-tailed Albatross (*Phoebastria albatrus*), Japanese Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus wumizusume*), and Common Murre (*Uria aalge*). A census was made for Japanese Murrelets around Biro Island.

In 2007, 10 Short-tailed Albatross chicks were moved to Mukojima Island, and all ten fledged successfully. This year 15 more chicks were translocated, and the team hopes that the new colony will increase on its own.

The Common Murre is Japan's most endangered species, with only a few breeding pairs; the former population of 40,000 has decreased to 2. Common Murre decoys were placed on ledges in the colony. In 1999 decoys were placed, with poor results for about 10 years. In 2006 both decoys and speakers were used, and Murres appeared at the island. There are about 15 and they all failed in breeding because of Jungle Crows (*Corvus macrorhynchos*). In 2008, 2 murre chicks fledged. Use of decoys and sounds is continuing, and Jungle Crows are being culled to improve breeding success of Common Murres.

"monitor the federal listing petition, state status, research, and conservation issues; provide information to interested parties; and coordinate research and conservation in the US, Mexico, and Canada." The Xantus's Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus hypoleucus*) occurs at sea along Baja California, California, Oregon, Washington, and (in small numbers) British Columbia; it breeds on islands off southern California and the west coast of Baja California. Below we summarize XMTC activities in 2008.

### September 2008 Meeting

On 18 September 2008, the XMTC held a productive all-day meeting in Davis, California. The Attendees included XMTC members from Mexico, the US, and Canada, including those from non-governmental organizations, federal and state government agencies, and research institutions.

The XMTC discussed member activities in 2008 related to listing status, monitoring, surveys, research, restoration, and conservation of Xantus's Murrelets, and identified work and priorities for 2009. We summarize these accomplishments below.

Harry Carter was elected as the new co-chair for the committee. He will help Shaye Wolf (former chair and current co-chair) with committee responsibilities.

### Listing under federal and state Endangered Species acts

A federal listing priority of number 5 was retained by the Xantus's Murrelet in the Candidate Notice of Review of December 2008. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will consult more closely with the XMTC during future annual status reviews.

The State of California officially listed the Xantus's Murrelet as Threatened on 22 December 2004; however, there is still no recovery plan or implementation schedule.

Xantus's Murrelets are listed as Endangered in Mexico. The species is not listed in Canada.

### Monitoring

Black rats (*Rattus rattus*) were eradicated on the Xantus's Murrelet breeding island of Anacapa in 2002. To measure response of the birds since then, nest monitoring was conducted on the island by the California Institute of Environmental Studies (CIES) for the ninth consecutive year in April-July 2008 (Whitworth et al. 2008b). Numbers of nests continued to increase, and timing of breeding was earlier than the last few years. Funding was from the *American Trader* Trustee Council (ATTC).

To inform restoration work on Santa Barbara Island, long-term monitoring was conducted in the Cat Canyon plot by Channel Islands National Park (CINP); funding was from the Montrose Trustee Council (MTC). The Nature Trail plot was not accessible due to nesting Brown Pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*). In addition, spotlight survey monitoring and nest searches were conducted by CIES, Carter Biological Consulting (CBC), and CINP in May 2008 to better assess the status of Xantus's Murrelets and Cassin's Auklets (*Ptychoramphus aleuticus*). Due to early breeding, surveys were conducted too late to fully assess population size. Funding was from the MTC. Work planned for the future includes nest monitoring related to Montrose restoration (through 2012), at-sea spotlight surveys (2009 and 2011), and radial spotlight

## XANTUS'S MURRELET TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Shaye Wolf and Harry Carter

The mandate of the Xantus's Murrelet Technical Committee (XMTC) is to

## COMMITTEE REPORTS • Xantus's Murrelet

surveys and prey sampling (2009). Long-term monitoring needs to be ensured after restoration work is completed.

After extensive monitoring at the Coronado Islands, Baja California in 2005-07, nest monitoring and spotlight surveys were not continued by CIES in 2008. The annual report for 2007 is available (Whitworth et al. 2008a). A summary report for 2005-07 studies will be prepared in 2009.

The Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas (GECI) initiated a monitoring program on Asunción and San Roque Islands, in relation to planned island restoration activities. They found Cassin's Auklets and Craveri's Murrelets (*Synthliboramphus craveri*), but not Xantus's Murrelets. GECI funded this project. CIES first discovered that Craveri's Murrelets nested at these islands in 2007 and suggested that past reports of nesting by Xantus's Murrelets apparently were in error. Chevron funded the 2007 project.

### Surveys

CBC and CIES assessed seabird population status, including Xantus's Murrelets, at the San Miguel Island group (Carter et al. 2008). Parameters included population size, breeding distribution, impacts from black rat predation, and various conservation issues. Surveys were conducted in 2007 and all historical data were summarized. Rat-depredated murrelet eggshells were found on the east side of San Miguel Island proper, indicating that proposed rat eradication would greatly benefit the very small murrelet population (about 20-100 breeding individuals) in the San Miguel Island group. Funding was from the MTC.

Preliminary assessment of population size and breeding distribution using spotlight surveys and nest searches were conducted by CIES and CBC at San Clemente Island in April 2008. A small population persists. Funding was from U.S. Navy and CIES. Similar preliminary assessments were conducted at San Martin and San Jerónimo Islands, Baja California, in April 2008. Craveri's Murrelets and Xantus's Murrelet (both

*scrippsi* and *hypoleucus* subspecies) occur and apparently breed at San Martín Island. *S. h. scrippsi* breeds at San Jerónimo. Findings will be included in range-wide assessment of population size being conducted by CIES. Funding was by Chevron.

### Research

Queen's University and CIES completed preliminary genetics analyses from blood samples of Xantus's and Craveri's Murrelets obtained at most breeding islands in California and northwestern Baja California in 1995-2007. A preliminary report has been produced (Birt et al. 2008). Major preliminary findings are: (1) Xantus's and Craveri's Murrelets are distinct species, with no interbreeding; (2) *hypoleucus* and *scrippsi* subspecies of Xantus's Murrelets probably are genetically distinct species with little interbreeding; (3) little genetic difference exists between *scrippsi* colonies; and (4) Craveri's Murrelets definitely breed at Asuncion, San Roque, Cedros, and San Martin Islands, based on genetic analyses of 2007 eggshell membranes. Additional samples were collected by CIES in April-May 2008 and will be included in final analyses. Funding was by Chevron.

Ian Austin of URS Corporation gathered light data at Coronado and Todos Santos Islands in 2007, and at Anacapa Islands in 2008, with funding from Chevron. He will be preparing a report in 2009.

### Restoration

Native plant restoration efforts were conducted on Santa Barbara Island by CINP in 2007–08 and are ongoing. Funding by MTC.

The proposed rat eradication project on San Miguel Island currently has been put on hold by the MTC, due to concerns about potential impacts of poison on the recently restored island fox (*Urocyon littoralis*) population.

Domestic cat control efforts are ongoing on the south portion of Guadalupe Island, México, near the Laysan Albatross (*Phoebastria*

*immutabilis*) colony. Cat eradication plans are being developed by GECI.

### Conservation issues

Liquid natural gas terminals are proposed near Xantus's Murrelet colonies in Channel Islands National Park and on the border of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, California: (1) Crystal Energy's Clearwater Port would be located in the Santa Barbara Channel, 10-15 km off Anacapa Island and approximately 20 km offshore Oxnard; (2) Esperanza Energy's Port Esperanza would be approximately 25 km seaward of Long Beach; and (3) Woodside Energy's Ocean Way terminal would be approximately 34 km offshore of Malibu. Woodside Energy suspended its proposal on 15 January 2009, but those of Crystal Energy and Esperanza Energy are still in progress. The XMTC is following these proposals closely.

Light pollution is a conservation priority for Xantus's Murrelets, especially given return of market squid (*Loligo opalescens*) fishery activity at Santa Barbara Island in 2008. XMTC supports the collection of baseline data nighttime light levels on Santa Barbara, Anacapa, and Santa Cruz Islands. Initial data were gathered at Anacapa Island in 2008 by URS Corporation. CINP plans to install light meters on Santa Barbara Island in 2009. A re-evaluation of marine reserves off the Channel Islands by state and federal agencies and various stakeholders is underway, and potential impacts of light pollution on Xantus's Murrelets are being considered.

Introduced mice are potentially an increasing problem on Xantus's Murrelet nesting islands. In 2007, the house mouse (*Mus musculus*) was confirmed by GECI on South Coronado Island, which also supports a native *Peromyscus*. In addition, in 2007, a *Peromyscus* species native to Cedros Island was introduced on West San Benito Island, which previously did not support any mammalian predators. Eradication of non-native mice is being considered at both colonies by GECI.

Minerals Management Service is developing programmatic regulations for offshore wind farm development, and we are monitoring opportunities to provide public comments.

#### **Management and Restoration Plan**

A Xantus's Murrelet Management and Restoration Plan would guide state and federal efforts to protect and restore Xantus's Murrelets at breeding islands in southern California and northwestern Baja California. Humboldt State University submitted a proposal to CDFG in December 2008 for preparing the plan. Its preparation would be led by Harry Carter, with input from several coauthors from the XMTC. The document would be published as a CDFG report, in both English and Spanish, and would be posted on CDFG and PSG websites. The plan would incorporate information compiled by the XMTC in 2006–2008. We are awaiting funding approval.

#### **Literature Cited**

- Birt, T.P., Friesen, V.L., Carter, H.R., Whitworth, D.L., and Newman, S.H. 2008. Genetic structure and inter-colony dispersal of Xantus's Murrelets: progress report. Unpublished report, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, and California Institute of Environmental Studies, Davis, California. 19 pp.
- Carter, H., D. Whitworth, P. Hébert, J. Koepke, P. Capitolo, G. McChesney, W. McIver, L. Ochikubo Chan, M. Pierson, A. Hebshi, and P. Martin. 2008. Status of breeding seabirds in the San Miguel Island group, California. Unpublished report, Carter Biological Consulting, Victoria, British Columbia; and California Institute of Environmental Studies, Davis, California. 131 pp.
- Whitworth, D.L., H.R. Carter, A. Bailey and F. Gress. 2008a. Nest monitoring of Xantus's Murrelets at Anacapa Island, California: 2008 annual report. Unpublished report, California Institute of Environmental Studies, Davis, California. 32 pp.
- Whitworth, D.L., H.R. Carter, F. Gress, E. Palacios, and J.S. Koepke. 2008b. Seabird monitoring at the Coronado Islands, Baja California, Mexico, in 2007. Unpublished report, California Institute of Environmental Studies, Davis, California. 66 pp.

#### **CRAIG S. HARRISON CONSERVATION FUND (Small-Grant Program)**

**Robert H. Day**

PSG's Executive Council established a Conservation Small-Grant Program during its Annual Meeting in February 2007. In addition to creating the program, EXCO initially funded it in the amount of \$10,000. At the Annual Meeting in February 2008, EXCO decided to rename this program the Craig S. Harrison Conservation Fund (CSHCF) in honor of Craig's extensive efforts on behalf of seabird conservation and PSG.

The objectives of the CSHCF (Conservation Fund) are: (1) for conservation and restoration activities that benefit seabirds in the Pacific Ocean; and (2) to help develop within-country seabird expertise in developing countries within or bordering the Pacific Ocean. This report summarizes our activities in calendar year (CY) 2008.

#### **Funding**

Funding of the Conservation Fund comes from any general funds that the EXCO wishes to authorize and from specified donations to the PSG, including: (1) a specific line on the annual membership-dues form provided to all members, which will allow individuals to direct donations to the Conservation Fund; (2) a specific line of the Annual Meeting registration form allowing individuals to direct donations to the Conservation Fund; (3) donations made directly to the Treasurer of PSG that are earmarked for the Conservation Fund; and (4) interest on money being held in the bank accounts for the Conservation Fund. Additional funds may be directed into the Conservation Fund by EXCO at any time, and the Conservation Fund Committee members also will investigate and apply for matching funds for particular projects, whenever possible. Any donated money will be managed by EXCO as a line item in the Annual Budget. In addition, we will consider running a Silent Auction as a means of raising funds.

In CY2008, the Conservation Fund received \$2,120 in donations but did not raise any money in a Silent Auction. We applied to the David and Lucile Packard Foundation for a 3-year grant to increase our funding abilities. Unfortunately, the financial crisis affecting our country also created a funding problem for the Packard Foundation, so it was unable to fund our proposal.

#### **Applicants for grants**

Since 2007, we have posted application guidelines and an application form on the web (available under the "Grants" tab on the PSG website). We received 9 inquiries during CY2008. We rejected 3 of these inquiries immediately because of inappropriate objectives or geographic coverage; we asked for further information about 2 other inquiries, but did not hear back from them. We funded 2 projects, and we offered to fund one project that will be delayed until the recipient returns to Ecuador from graduate school. Finally, one inquiry that began in late CY2008 was approved for funding after the end of the year and will be discussed in the CY2009 report.

The two projects funded in CY2007 have been completed, and we have received reports from the grantees. Amit Sukal's rat-eradication project in Fiji has been completed, and the eradication team is waiting to recheck the island to ensure that the eradication was successful. Dr. Cristián Suazo's study of seabird interactions with coastal fisheries in southern Chile also has been completed. Both reports have been posted on the website under the "Grants" menu.

The 2008 projects are in Guatemala and Indonesia. Dr. Raquel Siguenza de Micheo of the Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala received \$1,980 to begin a study of seabird bycatch in coastal fisheries on the Pacific coast of that country. Dr. Nick Brickle of the Wildlife Conservation Society of Bogor, Indonesia, received \$1,065 to help defray the costs for chartering a boat to study seabirds of Sunda Strait. Dr. Siguenza has completed her work and is in the process of writing a report for PSG. Dr. Brickle was supposed

## COMMITTEE REPORTS • Small-Grant Fund

TABLE 1. Budget of the Small-Grant Program in Calendar Year 2008.

<b>Beginning balance</b>	\$9,253.69
<b>Income</b>	
Cash donations	\$2,120.00
Silent Auction	\$0
Gains from investments (tentative)	\$0
Total income	\$2,120.00
<b>Expenses</b>	
Raquel Siguenza de Micheo (Guatemala)	\$1,980.00
Nick Brickle (Indonesia)	\$1,065.00
Bank transfer fees	\$0
Total expenses	\$3,045.00
<b>Ending balance</b>	\$8,328.69

to start the research in fall 2008, but his charter boat has been down for repairs for several months; he hopes to begin surveys very soon.

### **Looking ahead**

We have been able to develop a web-based set of guidelines and application forms that we think work quite well. We also believe that we need to: (1) increase awareness of the existence of this program in other countries of the Pacific; (2) draw on the entire PSG membership to raise awareness of the committee among potential applicants (and vice versa); and (3) solicit input from all PSG members on potential funding sources, to help make the program financially self-sustaining. In addition, we are encouraging grant recipients to publish a paper on their work in *Pacific Seabirds*, if they are not planning to publish it elsewhere.

I thank all of the members of the Conservation Fund Committee for

their time and efforts on behalf of this program.

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### **INVESTIGATING PELAGIC SEABIRD FORAGING AND PASSAGE IN THE SUNDA STRAIT, INDONESIA**

**Nick Brickle**

The Sunda Strait lies between the Indonesian Islands of Sumatra and Java; it forms one of the few narrow sea channels that connect the Indian Ocean with the Java Sea and the Pacific Ocean. The use of the Sunda Strait by pelagic birds, as both migration route and foraging area, is poorly known. However, the strait is likely to be of major importance to several species, including Bulwer's Petrel (*Bulweria bulwerii*), Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma monorhis*),

Streaked Shearwater (*Calonectris leucomelas*) and Wedge-tailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*). The adjacent Java Trench is also likely to be an important foraging area for Christmas Island Frigatebird (*Fregata andrewsi*) and Abbot's Booby (*Sula abbotti*), and possibly Barau's Petrel (*Pterodroma baraui*), Jouanin's Petrel (*Bulweria fallax*), as well as the Mascarene Petrel (*Pterodroma aterrima*), whose non-breeding habits are largely unknown. The area is now under increasing human pressure, including from a proposed bridge and an increasing pelagic fishing fleet.

This project will conduct an initial assessment of pelagic bird use of the Sunda Strait and Java Trench, and of the threats facing the birds, to highlight the need for further study or conservation action. The survey will also train young Indonesian ornithologists in seabird survey methods and conservation.

The project was due to begin in mid-2008 but experienced delays due to boat problems; these are now resolved. The team is set for three survey trips between April and October 2009, timed to the peak season for both passage migration and deep-sea upwelling in the Sunda Strait and Java Trench. We will write a bilingual report on our results, including maps prepared from GPS data, which will be submitted to government planning authorities, financial investors and construction contractors associated with the planned Sunda Strait bridge. We will also draft a paper for peer-reviewed publication.

Dr. Nick Brickle, Jalan Guntur No. 23, Bogor 16151, Indonesia; nick@brickle.com; +62 813 1557 6057

# PSG NEWS

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## PSG ELECTIONS FOR EXCO

In the fall 2008 elections, PSG members elected the following people to the Executive Council for 2009:

### OFFICERS

- **Chair-elect:** Tom Good
- **Secretary:** Mark Hipfner
- **Vice-Chair for Conservation:** Craig Harrison

### REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

- **Non-Pacific US:** Julie Ellis
- **Washington/Oregon:** Don Lyons
- **Canada:** Ken Morgan
- **Southern California:** Dan Robinette

The Chair-elect is elected every year. Other EXCO members run for office every two years; the following will slots will be up for election in fall 2009: Secretary, Student Representative, and regional representatives for Alaska and Russia, northern California, Hawai‘i/Pacific Rim, and Old World. A complete list of the current year’s EXCO members is on the inside back cover and on PSG’s website.

PSG’s elections are usually held in the fall. However, elections for the 2011 EXCO will be earlier, since new members will take office in September 2010, coincident with World Seabird Conference. Ballots will be sent out no later than 1 April 2010, and will be counted by no later than 1 May.

If you are interested in helping with PSG’s work, please consider nominating yourself! Even if an incumbent is running, we encourage a choice between 2 or more candidates for each slot. Contact the Elections Chair, Pat Baird (pabaird@sfu.ca; [604] 928-5510). Anyone is eligible for EXCO, including students, non-academics who work with seabirds, and retired people. The only requirements are that (1) regional representatives must reside in the area they represent, and (2) the student representative must be a student. (*Note:* students are also eligible to run for other positions on EXCO).

Approximately half of our members (54%) are now reading *Pacific Seabirds* on the Web. The other half are continuing to receive hard copies, at their specific request. It’s gratifying to the Editor that people really want to hold her product and see it in their bookcases; however, we encourage everyone who doesn’t have a strong preference to consider viewing *Pacific Seabirds* electronically. Every copy we don’t print and mail saves trees and PSG’s money.

Institutions, libraries, and all members who have requested hard copies will continue to receive them in the mail.

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## PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE IS RENAMED COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

### PACIFIC SEABIRDS GOES ELECTRONIC (PARTLY)

With this issue, *Pacific Seabirds* takes a major step into the 21st century: we have asked PSG members to “receive” the journal online from now on, unless they specifically want a hard copy. Back issues have been posted on PSG’s website for several years, due to efforts by Craig Harrison, the editor, and Webmaster Lisa Ballance. (A few back issues are still missing from the website; the editor apologizes—she hopes to post their PDFs soon.) The goal is to publish each new issue on the Web at or before the time of mailing hard copies.

Because PSG’s publications now extend beyond traditional printed works, EXCO decided in February 2009 to change the committee’s name to Communications Committee. The committee will include (among others) the Website Coordinator, Listserve Coordinator, *Marine Ornithology* managing editor, and *Pacific Seabirds* editor.

Committee Coordinator Pat Jodice announced that *Marine Ornithology* files will soon be available the SORA webpage (Searchable Ornithological Research Archive; <http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/>). The files will also remain on *Marine Ornithology*’s webpage.

# PUBLICATIONS OF THE PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP

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The Pacific Seabird Group publishes symposia and other works. **PSG Symposia** are occasionally held at Annual Meetings; those which have been published are listed below. **Technical Reports** prepared by PSG working groups also are listed. *To order one of these PSG publications, please see instructions after each item.*

**Abstracts** of papers and posters given at PSG meetings are published annually. Abstracts for meetings of 1974 through 1993 appeared in the PSG Bulletin (Volumes 2–20); for meetings of 1994 through 2003, in Pacific Seabirds (Volumes 21–30); and for meetings of 1997 and later, at [www.pacificseabirdgroup.org](http://www.pacificseabirdgroup.org)

PSG publishes the journals ***Pacific Seabirds*** ([www.pacificseabirdgroup.org](http://www.pacificseabirdgroup.org)) and ***Marine Ornithology*** ([www.marineornithology.org](http://www.marineornithology.org)). Current and past issues of both journals are available online or by subscription. Back issues may be obtained online; those of Pacific Seabirds also are available from the PSG Treasurer (order form on last page).

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## SYMPOSIA

**SHOREBIRDS IN MARINE ENVIRONMENTS.** Frank A. Pitelka (Editor). Proceedings of an International Symposium of the Pacific Seabird Group. Asilomar, California, January 1977. Published June 1979 in Studies in Avian Biology, Number 2. *Available free of charge at* <http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/Condor/cooper/sab.php>

**TROPICAL SEABIRD BIOLOGY.** Ralph W. Schreiber (Editor). Proceedings of an International Symposium of the Pacific Seabird Group, Honolulu, Hawaii, December 1982. Published February 1984 in Studies in Avian Biology, Number 8. *Available free of charge at* <http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/Condor/cooper/sab.php>

**MARINE BIRDS: THEIR FEEDING ECOLOGY AND COMMERCIAL FISHERIES RELATIONSHIPS.** David N. Nettleship, Gerald A. Sanger, and Paul F. Springer (Editors). Proceedings of an International Symposium of the Pacific Seabird Group, Seattle, Washington, January 1982. Published 1984 as Canadian Wildlife Service, Special Publication. *Out of print; available free of charge at* [www.pacificseabirdgroup.org](http://www.pacificseabirdgroup.org)

**THE USE OF NATURAL VS. MAN-MODIFIED WETLANDS BY SHOREBIRDS AND WATERBIRDS.** R. Michael Erwin, Malcolm C. Coulter, and Howard L. Cogswell (Editors). Proceedings of an International Symposium at the first joint meeting of the Colonial Waterbird Society and the Pacific Seabird Group, San Francisco, California, December 1985. Colonial Waterbirds 9(2), 1986. \$12.00. *Order from:* Ornithological Societies of North America, PO Box 1897, Lawrence, Kansas 66044; phone (800) 627-0629; no online orders.

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## TECHNICAL PUBLICATIONS

**EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL SEABIRD RESTORATION WORKSHOP.** Kenneth I. Warheit, Craig S. Harrison, and George J. Divoky (editors). Exxon Valdez Restoration Project Final Report, Restoration Project 95038. PSG Technical Publication Number 1. 1997. Available free of charge at [www.pacificseabirdgroup.org](http://www.pacificseabirdgroup.org)

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